Arthritis Care responds to the Budget 2017

Wednesday 8 March, 2017

Earlier this week, we set out what we wanted the government to do for people with arthritis in the Budget, which the Chancellor delivered this afternoon.

Responding to the Budget, Nikki Hill, Director of Policy, Communications and Information, said:

“Arthritis Care is pleased that the government has begun to recognise the huge pressure on adult social care in England, which has left more than a million people without the support they need.[1]

"The announcement of £2 billion of additional funding for social care is a step in the right direction. However, it falls short of what is needed to address the deepening crisis in our care system. There has been a £4.6 billion reduction in funding over five years,[2] and demand for care is growing rapidly. The money announced today will help to alleviate some of the pressure on care services, but will still leave many people with arthritis without support.

“We are disappointed that the government has not addressed the financial difficulties facing the NHS in England. The funding announced for A&E and Sustainability and Transformation Plans is very welcome, but does alleviate the huge deficits of NHS Trusts[3] and CCGs[4] that mean people with arthritis cannot get the help they need.

“This was also a missed opportunity for the government to halt its counterproductive cut to Employment and Support Allowance, which will see new claimants in the work-related activity group £30 a week worse off from April this year. We believe the change will make it harder for people with arthritis to move closer to work and urge the government to think again.

“Today’s Budget recognised some of the challenges facing older and disabled people, but there is a very long way to go before people with arthritis get the support they need to lead full and active lives.”

Announcements in the Budget included:

- £425m for accident and emergency departments and the implementation of local proposals to improve health and care (Sustainability and Transformation Plans
- £2 billion of additional funding, over three years, for adult social care in England
- Publication of a green paper, a consultation document which allows feedback on government proposals, on the future financing of social care

[1] 1.2 million people aged over 65 don't receive the care and support they need with essential daily living activities (Age UK, 2017, Health and Care of Older People in England 2017). There are also many working age disabled people with unmet needs (Scope, 2015, Disabled people's experiences of social care).

[2] ADASS budget survey 2016

[3] Waiting times are increasing and performance is deteriorating against a number of key indicators and NHS Trusts reported deficits of £2.5 billion in 2015/16 (Nuffield Trust, The Health Foundation and The King's Fund, 2016, The Autumn Statement: Joint statement on health and social care)

[4] 53 per cent of trusts and 63 per cent of CCGs are fairly or very pessimistic about reaching financial balance in 2017/18 (The King's Fund, March 2017, Quarterly Monitoring Report)

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